Asking for Aces

23 June 2020

Why knowledge of Aces is useful

For Suit contracts:

♥ You have found a fit of at least 8 cards in a suit between you and your partner

♠ Through point count or Loosing Trick Count, you think you may have strength for a slam

♦ To win at least 12 tricks, you generally need all four Aces

♣ Using a Blackwood bid of 4 NT, you can ask your partner for the number of Aces she has

♥ The other two cards that it would be very useful to know if your partner holds are the King and the Queen of trumps

♠ Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) enables you to ask about these two cards as well

For No Trumps contracts:

♥ Gerber is a way of asking for Aces when the last bid by your partner has been in No Trumps

Three ways of asking for Aces

1. **Blackwood**, bidding 4 NT, asks how many Aces your partner holds

2. **Roman Key Card Blackwood** (**RCKB**) , bidding 4 NT, asks:

   a. How many of the top five key cards (the 4 Aces and King of Trumps) your Partner has and,

   b. if your partner holds exactly two of these, does she also hold the Queen of Trumps?

You and your Partner must agree whether to use 4 NT **for** Blackwood **or** RKCB

3. **Gerber**, bidding 4♣, is used directly after a NT bid by your partner to ask how many Aces she holds

A follow up bid of 5 NT (for 1 & 2) or 5♣ (for 3) can be used to ask for more information about Kings, but you would only do this if considering a Grand Slam (winning all 13 tricks)

If you do not like the answer to a 4 NT request, you can usually play at the 5 level

Gerber is more suitable for NT, because you can stop to play at 4 NT - only one level above game

Blackwood

Blackwood, bidding 4 NT, asks how many Aces your partner holds

Asking for Aces shows an agreement of Trumps

Partner responses to Blackwood:

Response from Partner	Meaning
5 ♣	0 or 4 Aces
5 ♦	1 Ace
5 ♥	2 Aces
5 ♠	3 Aces

If you follow up with a bid of 5 NT:

Response from Partner	Meaning
6 ♣	0 or 4 Kings
6 ♦	1 King
6 ♥	2 Kings
6 ♠	3 Kings

Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)

RKCB, bidding 4 NT, asks how many of the 4 Aces and the King of Trumps your partner holds

Partner responses to RKCB:

Response from Partner	Meaning
5 ♣	3 or 0 Key cards (30)
5 ♦	1 or 4 Key cards (41)
5 ♥	2 Key cards w.o. Queen of Trumps
5 ♠	2 Key cards incl. Queen of Trumps

If you follow up with a bid of 5 NT:

Response from Partner	Meaning
6 ♣	0 Kings
6 ♦	1 King, excl. King of Trumps
6 ♥	2 Kings, excl. King of Trumps
6 ♠	3 Kings, excl. King of Trumps

Gerber

Gerber, bidding 4♣ after your partner has bid NT, asks how many Aces your partner holds

Partner responses to Gerber:

Response from Partner	Meaning
4 ♦	0 or 4 Aces
4 ♥	1 Ace
4 ♠	2 Aces
4 NT	3 Aces

If you follow up with a bid of 5♣ :

Response from Partner	Meaning
5 ♦	0 or 4 Kings
5 ♥	1 King
5 ♠	2 Kings
5 NT	3 Kings

Example 1

Vulnerability: None
Dealer: West

West's hand:

♠   K   Q   7   3   2
♥   A   Q
♦   A   K   Q   J
♣   A   K

East's hand:

♠   A   J   10   5   4
♥   K   8   6
♦   8   5   2
♣   8   7

Bidding using Blackwood:

Bidding:

West	North	East	South
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
7 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Bidding using RKCB:

Bidding:

West	North	East	South
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
7 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Example 2

Vulnerability: None
Dealer: West

West's hand:

♠   A   J   10   9   5   4   3

♥   A   K   Q

♦   K   Q

♣   K   J

East's hand:

♠   K   Q   8   6

♥   9   5   4

♦   A   8   6

♣   10   5   4

Bidding using Blackwood:

Bidding:			
West	**North**	**East**	**South**
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Bidding using RKCB:

Bidding:			
West	**North**	**East**	**South**
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
6 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Example 3

South's hand:

♠	A	Q	8	6	5	4
♥	A	10	3
♦	3	2
♣	Q	5

North's hand:

♠	K	J
♥	K	Q	J
♦	A	K	Q	J
♣	A	K	7	6

Bidding using **Blackwood:**

Bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♥	Pass	6 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Bidding using **RKCB:**

Bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♠	Pass	7 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Example 4

Vulnerability: All
Dealer: West

West's hand:

♠ Q 8 5
♥ K Q 8 2
♦ J 9 8 3
♣ A 7

East's hand:

♠ A K 6
♥ A 10 9 6
♦ A K Q
♣ Q 8 4

Bidding using Gerber:

Bidding:			
West	**North**	**East**	**South**
1 NT	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
5 ♥	Pass	6 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Thank you